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ALERT MEMORANDUM

POLAND: Challenge to Polish Leadership Increases

*The Polish leadership is facing the gravest challenge to its authority since the strikes on the Baltic Coast ended in August. The Warsaw leaders of Solidarity have issued a list of six political demands and threatened a large-scale strike in Warsaw factories if the regime fails to begin talks on these demands by noon Thursday. It will be difficult for the regime to acquiesce to the union demands, especially in view of the TASS warning on Monday against a railway strike and of the political quality of the present demands. Thus the present situation moves us closer to coercive measures by the regime or a possible Soviet military invasion.*

The union demands include:

- The release of the printer arrested and charged with betraying state secrets by copying a document that deals with official policy on dissidents.
- The naming of the authors of the document on dissidents.
- The release of jailed dissidents.
- An official investigation of the people responsible for suppressing demonstrating workers during labor protests in 1970 and 1976.
- The establishment of a joint Government - Solidarity Parliamentary Commission to investigate the powers of the police.
- The limiting of the state budget for the prosecutor's office.

This new confrontation comes at an already tense time with reported strikes on 25 November by railway workers in Gdansk and Warsaw, by workers in several factories in the capital and in Lodz, and by coal miners in Silesia.

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If its past responses to such crises provide an indication, the regime will try to buy time, possibly by undertaking negotiations in the hope of splitting the national Solidarity leadership, bringing pressure by moderate union leaders and the Church to bear, and seeking a compromise solution.

In the event strikes in Warsaw ensue, similar work actions are likely to spread throughout Poland. In these circumstances the Kania regime would have a high incentive to use limited force in an effort to reestablish its political authority, to stave off a Soviet intervention, and to preempt widespread violence. Such a limited use of force would probably include the arrest of militant union leaders and dissidents and the declaration of a state of national emergency. The resort to force, however, could provoke the very disorder the regime seeks to avoid.

While the Soviets will allow the Polish regime some time to contain the situation, these developments will serve to convince the Soviets that, unless the unions can be made to go back to work peacefully, coercive measures either on the part of the Polish leadership or the Soviets themselves will eventually have to be employed.

[REDACTED] No evidence, however, of the large-scale mobilization or logistics activity indicative of an imminent Soviet invasion [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Nonetheless, the increased preparedness level of forces that would probably be part of an intervention force [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] would indicate that the Soviets could move rapidly to ready an invasion. [REDACTED]

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